

# System Configuration Team Meeting Notes

March 16, 2006

## ***1. Greetings and Introductions.***

The March 16 System Configuration Team meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at this meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should contact Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420.

## ***2. Follow-Up on Corps' Flood Control Study.***

Lonnie Mettler answered questions about the Corps' recon-level flood control report. Paul Wagner asked about the focus of the study and the potential to reduce its estimated \$30 million cost. Mettler replied that there is an opportunity to re-focus the study if that is the direction the region would prefer to go; the Corp is open to regional input of that kind. Mettler noted that, during the second phase of the recon-level study, the development of the project management plan, there will be further opportunity for regional input into the study scope and design.

Other SCT questions focused on the following aspects of the Flood Control Study:

- The need to do extensive potential flood damage/impact assessments – Mettler explained that the assessments that are currently in use are more than 40 years old, and the region has changed extensively in the interim.
- Will there be cost-share mechanism, or does the Corps envision that the study will be entirely CRFM-funded? Answer: our recommendation is that it will be entirely funded through CRFM, and the only cost-sharing will be to the region's ratepayers.
- Is it fair to say that most of the biological benefits of altered flood control operations would accrue during lower-flow years? Answer: yes, although this may conflict with power generation needs during the winter.
- Have the region's policymakers really thought through that fundamental conflict, which might mean that, at the end of a very expensive study, fish really don't gain anything at all? Answer: Libby is really the only federal reservoir that has a pre-draft that could be significantly altered after the new year's runoff forecasts are received; the other projects are drafted prior to that date.

- Have there been further discussions of the technical meeting between SCT members and other regional flood control experts, or of the possibility of convening a new Regional Forum team to meet regularly about the System Flood Control Study, as discussed at last week's IT meeting? Answer: the intent is to see what happens over the next few days, and have some further discussions about what additional meetings or teams may be needed.

On the positive side, said Paul Wagner, the region has been complaining for years about the way flood control drawdowns are done; this is an opportunity to engage in that discussion, and come up with an agreeable workplan and study. I don't see a lot of potentially major changes coming out of this study, he said, but it would be worthwhile to engage in the process to see what refinements might be possible. My suggestion would be to make a decision from an informed standpoint, once this process is a little farther down the road, he said – I think this is worth pursuing. Flow is certainly an important component of our fish recovery efforts, he added. Hevlin said that, in his view, it would be useful if some sort of memo agreement on a collaborative approach to the project management plan could be developed.

After a few minutes of further discussion, project manager Laura Orr reminded the SCT that the Corps is still accepting technical comments on the recon-level report through the end of this month, and even beyond, as long as they know the comments are coming. Our goal is to incorporate all comments received as soon as possible, Orr said. She asked anyone with comments or questions to call her directly at 206/764-3575.

### ***3. Resolution of the Little Goose RSW Schedule.***

Randy Chong said his understanding was that Rock Peters had briefed the IT on this topic at the group's March meeting; the IT declined the opportunity to elevate this issue to the Regional Executive Committee. Based on that outcome, Chong said, the Corps is proceeding with a Little Goose design schedule that will lead to an operational RSW by the spring of 2009. My understanding is that that will give you 11 months of design time, rather than eight months, Hevlin observed. And will you be conducting research in 2007? Kim Fodrea asked. Yes, but the design will be in place by then, and the data will be used only to inform a decision as to whether or not to proceed to let the contract, Chong said – if we see something troubling in the data, that might persuade us not to proceed to contracting. What if you aren't able to collect data in 2007? Fodrea asked. Then it will be up to the region whether or not to proceed, based on what we already know, Chong replied.

With respect to the Lower Monumental RSW contract, Chong said the proposals were due last Monday. What we know, at this point, is that there will probably only be a few bidders on the Lower Monumental RSW contract. Because the RSW's center of gravity has to be shifted upstream at this project, we have to build a foundation in the forebay at Lower Monumental, he said, which means that the cost of the LoMo RSW will

likely be 25 percent higher than the cost of the Ice Harbor RSW. That is considerably more than we had budgeted, he said; because we are now obliged to fully fund contracts, which could have an impact, in terms of other projects that don't get done this summer. We'll take up the most recent Lower Monumental budget estimate, and the question of its potential impact on the remaining items in the FY'06 CRFM program, at our April meeting, Hevlin said.

#### **4. FY'07 CRFM Program Prioritization.**

Hevlin distributed copies of the most recent FY'07 CRFM measures worksheet, dated March 16. He introduced Regional Forum facilitator Donna Silverberg, on hand to help guide the SCT through this year's criteria development and prioritization processes. Silverberg directed the group's attention to the SCT's criteria and guidelines for the prioritization of the CRFM program, dated July 21, 2005. Silverberg noted that the Power Planning Council has requested some additional clarity about how the SCT's CRFM ranking and prioritization process works; it was agreed that Hevlin will attend an upcoming Council meeting to provide it.

The group devoted a lengthy discussion to the criteria document, offering a variety of questions, comments and additions. Ultimately, Silverberg said she will re-draft the criteria to reflect the changes made during today's discussion, and distribute them to the SCT membership in advance of the group's April meeting.

Between now and the next SCT meeting, I'd like to try to schedule the federal and non-federal caucuses, at which the eight voting SCT parties will score each CRFM line-item on a scale of one to five, Hevlin said. After a few minutes of discussion, however, there was general agreement that it may make sense to wait until the project proposals are available, probably in advance of the SCT's May meeting. The Corps will distribute the work plans to the SCT as soon as they are available. Hevlin said he will try to schedule the federal and non-federal caucuses prior to the SCT's May meeting.

#### **5. Coordination of May 17-18 SCT/WQT Site Visit.**

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the SCT/WQT site visit in May. Hevlin noted that at the last SCT meeting there was interest in visiting Chief Joseph, to see the new flow deflectors, Rocky Reach for the new bypass system and outfall, and the Ice Harbor RSW. *(The site visit locations were changed after this meeting, the Teams will visit Lower Granite, Little Goose on May 17, and Ice Harbor and McNary on May 18).* It was agreed to hold condensed meetings of SCT and WQT on May 18 during the site tour.

#### **6. FFDRWG and SRWG Updates.**

Mike Langeslay said the most recent Portland District FFDRWG meeting was

held about two months ago. Among the topics discussed:

- B2 full-flow PIT-tag detection system: on schedule, and the JBS is up and operating
- B2 corner collector: also on schedule, and the antenna is being installed as we speak
- Bonneville spillway: yearling chinook spill and dam survival is being tested this year; tagging is already underway

There was a meeting yesterday to discuss everything we're doing at The Dalles, said Langeslay, including the BGS and its impacts on navigation hydraulics; vortex suppression testing; the radio-telemetry study of tailrace survival and behavior; the hydroacoustic study of distribution across the six bays, and the balloon-tag study. The bottom line, on the BGS, is that the site we had chosen previously is unsuitable because of the hazardous hydraulics it creates for navigation, he said; because we no longer have a location, it will not be possible to have the BGS in place in 2007. Langeslay added that the wire rope replacement project is back on track for completion prior to the 2006 spill season. The next FFDRWG meeting is scheduled for March 23; at that meeting, we will be scheduling the next few SRWG meetings, he said.

Marvin Shuttles said the next Walla Walla District FFDRWG meeting is scheduled for May 4-5 at the Corps' District offices. The topics discussed at the most recent Walla Walla meeting were reviewed at the February SCT meeting. He noted that the Ice Harbor flow deflector balloon-tag injury testing is ongoing, with about a week left to run.

## ***7. Next SCT Meeting Date.***

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for April 20, 2006. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.